

# ROCHESTER HISTORY

Edited by DEXTER PERKINS, *City Historian*  
and BLAKE MCKELVEY, *Assistant City Historian*

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## Rochester and World War I

BY SYLVIA R. BLACK AND HARRIETT JULIA NAYLOR

Late in the afternoon of October 9, 1914, a young man of about twenty-two years, walked briskly out of his office in downtown Rochester. He hummed a tune which had been running in his mind for two days, and he frowned slightly because he could not quite formulate the words which would go with the melody. He was perspiring from the hot, humid day and looked up at the threatening clouds from time to time, hoping it might rain soon to ease the atmosphere. He was wondering how the first game of the World's Championship Series between the Philadelphia Americans and Boston Nationals, begun that afternoon, had come out. Still humming the tune, he stopped at a near-by newsstand, bought a paper, and read the large headlines which reported "great crowds at the opening." He wished fervently that he might be in Philadelphia to see the game.

After reading the account of the World's Series to his satisfaction, he glanced through the paper rather hastily, and soon became interested in a report of a United States officer who was narrating his observations at the Marne with soldiers of the Allied armies. Although the young man was not particularly interested in the European war, he brightened up as he read the word "soldier," for he remembered then the name of the tune which was rambling through his mind. Walking home, he sang the air softly to himself, "I Didn't Raise My Boy To Be A Soldier," never realizing that his youth and age would be weighed

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down by war and balanced by a very small period of peace, a peace which would seem to him, thirty years later, like some strange interlude in his lifetime of war.

## Reactions to the European War

This hypothetical young man was typical for the most part of many Rochesterians in 1914 who did not take the European war very seriously. It never occurred to anyone in Rochester that because the Archduke of Austria was assassinated at Serajevo we ourselves would be drawn into the struggle eventually, for Europe seemed distant and even strange. On June 29, 1914, the editor of the *Post Express* wrote about the assassination at Serajevo as "an event of startling significance," but he did not elaborate on the theme to any great extent; other editorials showed a routine dislike for all plots and plotters. What actually concerned Rochesterians in 1914, besides the World Series, was the United States' embroilment in Mexican affairs. And even though our troops were withdrawn from that country in the fall of 1914, the United States was at odds with Mexico up to the time we declared war on Germany. Rochester's immediate interest in European affairs was limited to her concern for friends and relatives who had gone to Europe in the summer of 1914. Ernest R. Clark, an English teacher at East High School, had led a party of twenty teachers there that summer. There was also a party of Catholic clergymen on a pilgrimage to Rome; and the Rev. Ray Allen and about fifty or sixty other Rochester people were there, too.

Not only did Rochesterians take the European war lightly in respect to themselves, but the ideology of peace, as the absence of war, was their general belief at that time. So, it is not strange to us, who have held this belief up to the very eve of the Pearl Harbor attack, that the editor of the Rochester *Post Express* on October 3, 1914, decried the thought prevalent in England of 1914 that "peace depends upon the armed force of the nations . . . War," he declared, "must be viewed as an evil, and by many thoughtful minds as an unnecessary evil . . . When the influence of a 'war lord' and of the caste which may be described as his parasites is weakened, militarism will gradually die out, and the world may be freed from the nightmare of war."

But though people generally felt secure and safe in baseball-loving America, events in Europe as they affected this country, could not and were not entirely ignored. As early as July 31, 1914, the Rochester Stock Exchange followed New York in suspending until further notice. Sugar and flour prices were soaring; the price of sugar went up from \$4.85 to \$8.50 a hundredweight, while the cost of flour rose from \$6.25 to \$7.80 a barrel within a week. The shoe manufacturers were concerned about how they were going to get calfskin, since the United States imported from sixty to seventy-five per cent of its calfskin supply from Europe. The fruit situation was also very serious. Large amounts of dried apples had been sent to Germany annually, which was our usual market for this product, but now the fruit shippers were quite worried. The future outlook for importing other articles seemed dark, too; such articles as linens, luxuries of various sorts, and dolls, which we bought from Germany.

While native Rochesterians may not have concerned themselves too deeply in the struggle overseas, there were quite a number of foreign born in the city who felt the blow to their individual countries as a personal one. Such were the French and Belgian people, who left Rochester as reservists to fight for their native land. About 1,100 Belgians declared themselves ready to fight for their country; also, about two hundred Swiss people considered returning home. On August 10, services were conducted at the French Church for twenty-seven Dutch soldiers who were leaving for the war. Rochester Italians, however, were said to be "all for peace," since they disliked both the Austrians and French.

Along with the sympathy expressed by many foreign born living here, there was also noticeable among native Rochesterians a growing attitude of antipathy towards Germany and a more cordial one towards England, which was reflected in the newspapers of the time. The father-to-son distrust of England became dwarfed in contrast to the outspoken dislike of Germany, which was responsible for the atrocities in Belgium. As early as July, 1914, the *Rochester Post Express* pointed out editorially the similarity of ideals between America and England, and said that if this war was to prove "inescapable" it must be hoped "that England and America, the right and left arms of civilization in the world, will emerge triumphant after the war storm had blown away."

## Introduction to War

We might have plodded along for years in the state of mind in which we were living in 1914, feeling sorry for the victims of Germany, giving a helping hand cheerfully to organizations for the relief of the inhabitants of the invaded countries, and deluding ourselves with the idea that Europe and her war were distant and as remote from us as if she were of another world from ours, if we had not had the stunning blow of the sinking of the *Lusitania* on May 7, 1915. Americans felt that the basic humane principles of civilized peoples were outraged by the sinking of this passenger liner, carrying 1,198 victims, of whom 124 were Americans, to the bottom of the sea. By this horrible act, American neutrality was killed, and our national sympathies became definitely anti-German rather than pro-Ally. A popular remark at this time was, "Sure, I'm neutral. I don't care which of the Allies licks Germany." Indeed, it becomes crystal clear, as we view the events from the sinking of the *Lusitania* until our declaration of war in April, 1917, that the submarine, the instrument which we can boast of as having been created in America, was the direct cause of our declaration of war with Germany.

By 1916 many farsighted people, realizing that our country was bound to enter the war eventually, were advocating the system of universal military service. One of the earliest expressions of this sort from any group was taken by our local Chamber of Commerce. Out of a total number of 273 members who voted on the measure, only twenty-three negatived it. After a committee of the Chamber had considered and rejected many other proposals for national defense not based upon universal military service, this proposal was at last agreed upon. Throughout the year of 1916, the Rochester Chamber of Commerce encouraged their many member factories to increase enlistments for military service, at the same time urging them to agree to pay their employees, while they were on duty, the difference between the money they earned as civilians and their earnings while in the service. In January, 1917, when Rush Rhees, President of the University of Rochester, had come back from the Congress of Constructive Patriotism, he voiced the conviction of that group that "a policy of universal military training is the only protection a democracy can have against the develop-

ment of a militarist caste, and that the time has come for us to undertake it."

Yet in the early spring of that year, when the members of the Rochester Chamber of Commerce signed a resolution urging Congress to pass a law embracing universal military service, public opinion was still unprepared for any measures smacking of militarism, so that this bill was shelved until the Germans renewed their submarine attacks on our shipping, which forced us to rely on hasty military preparation and training of troops at the time of our entry into the war.

But events in Europe were following each other in such logical order and the unlawful acts against our shipping were mounting in such great numbers that everyone expected sooner or later we would declare war on Germany. "The consensus of opinion of the country as the wires are bringing it in," declaimed the editor of the *Post Express* on February 1, 1917, "is that Germany has challenged us to war and issued its defiance to civilization and that we should accept the challenge without delay." On this same day there was a meeting held at Convention Hall to protest against the German enslavement of Belgians and against the deportation of Poles and Serbians. Rush Rhees presided, and many prominent men were seated on the platform. Despite the bitter cold night, about 2,500 people thronged the Hall.

"O, land of freedom, make your choice,  
Are you for Belgium or the Hun?"

were the words with which Dr. Richard C. Cabot opened the meeting, and the 2,500 people rose as one to applaud wildly these lines from Harold Begbie's *Neutral*. Benjamin A. Chase also spoke that night, saying that it was high time our nation spoke out against the Germans' barbaric acts and that we should protest against the United States having any diplomatic relations with a country whose leaders continued to act so shamefully.

One very decided result of our increasingly belligerent attitude was the cropping up of pacifists. On March 25, 1917, such a group met in Convention Hall and passed a resolution that the United States should not declare war without a vote of the people. Again on Palm Sunday (April 1), a meeting was held at the Avon Theater under the auspices of the American Union Against Militarism. Exactly what

was said at these gatherings is hard to determine, however, as the disapproving newspapers gave them but scanty notice. Indeed, their upsurge proved definitely that the feeling against Germany was mounting.

On April 2, when Woodrow Wilson made his memorable address to Congress, saying that "the world must be made safe for democracy," Rochester echoed his sentiments. The next day the usual matinée program at the Temple Theater was interrupted by "a brief period of patriotism," during which time the orchestra played "The Star Spangled Banner." At the sight of a large flag dropped in front of the curtain and a picture of Wilson projected upon it, the audience applauded unrestrainedly. Special assemblies were held in the schools, and many factories began the day by gathering the workers together for a brief rally. Flags were flown from practically all public buildings and from many homes and industrial plants, and in many instances it seems that it was a matter of rivalry to see which firm could hang out the most flags or think up the most striking display. Even the members of the Municipal Ball League, which scheduled their first game of the season on May 6, advertised in the local newspapers that their game would consist of "a programme with a decided military tinge."

The day after Congress declared war, the offices of the Rochester recruiting station were bare of any men eager to enlist in any of the services. All morning long the men in charge of the station waited and waited for enlistments. Finally, in the middle of the afternoon, a young man opened the door of the recruiting office; the officer in charge looked up from his typing and said very eagerly, "Recruit?" "No," replied the man, "reporter." The recruiting officer glumly went back to his typing. This lack of enthusiasm prompted another officer to say of Rochester that it had won its name as the "best governed city because it lacked sufficient spirit to make it a 'roughneck' town."

Preparations for the draft were made in Rochester sometime before the selective service bill passed Congress, and therefore, by the time of the President's proclamation declaring June 5 as registration day, the city's organization was all set up and ready for action. It had been feared that there might be some protest, perhaps even some flare-up of violence on registration day, as so many people associated the word "draft" with the discriminatory system of the Civil War. On the appointed day, however, Rochester's young men between the ages of

twenty-one and thirty gathered at the designated places and registered in an orderly and law-abiding fashion. The first draft enrolled some 27,784 young men, of whom 5,308 were aliens, and 260 enemy aliens. Of this number, 13,483 claimed exemption on grounds other than non-citizenship. Altogether, of the 23,000 Rochester men who took part in the war, slightly more than half were taken in the Selective Service. Despite the fact that recruiting was sluggish during the first few weeks after our entry into the war, about 50 per cent of Rochester's men in the service had volunteered compared with 30 per cent in the country as a whole, as was shown by an after-the-war estimate. At the time the first draft quota was fixed, Rochester and Monroe County were given credit for 1,436 men already in service.

### A Wartime City

Unlike the one continuous war loan campaign which this country is conducting today, the United States launched five separate loans from the spring of 1917 to the spring of 1919, each campaign lasting about four or five weeks. Liberty Loan posters, placed in store windows and on walls all over Rochester, made persuasive appeals to Rochesterians to help finance the war. Added to the visual stimulus of these posters, speakers, including war heroes and moving picture stars, such as Mary Pickford, Douglas Fairbanks, and Blanche Bates, spoke here on numerous occasions. And at many rallies locally prominent men and women urged people to buy bonds to the utmost of their abilities. The "Liberty Coach" was driven through the city on its way across the country, and the "Liberty Ball" rolled through our streets on its coast-to-coast mission of arousing enthusiasm. A replica of a dug-out was set up on a street corner and bond-buyers were permitted to go through it. On the opening day of the Fourth Liberty Loan campaign, two airmen from Baker's Field staged a "raid" on the city, dropping literature upon the fascinated citizens to whom aerial warfare was still something new and exciting, instead of the familiar horror it has since become through the medium of the newsreel.

The result of these five drives in Rochester was the raising of \$126,668,650, a sum about \$5,000,000 in excess of the city's quota. In addition, the sale of War Savings Stamps, many of them bought by school children, brought in another \$3,000,000, and \$32,697,500 more

was invested between campaigns in United States Treasury Certificates. In per capita sales of War Savings Stamps, Monroe County exceeded any other county in New York and New Jersey, not excepting New York City.

Meanwhile, Rochesterians were also besieged with pleas for all kinds of worthy causes. The Chamber of Commerce strove, for the most part successfully, to prevent the fleecing of generous citizens by unscrupulous people, who, needless to say, devised ingenious schemes for extorting money, and the Chamber set itself, also, against the various chain-letter rackets which sprang up. "Racket" is perhaps the wrong word to use, as many of them were honest but ill-directed attempts to help in the war effort. As a matter of fact, considerable confusion resulted just because the great majority of the projects for which pleas were made were deserving of support. Citizens with kind hearts and the best of intentions simply did not know where to turn, but they responded generously. In 1917, the Chamber of Commerce pointed with justifiable pride to a national survey indicating that this city was the "most liberal" in the country. In addition to the strain on the poor average citizen, these numerous drives, taken all together, were extremely inefficient—overlapping and extravagant in the use of money, manpower, and advertising appeal. The situation was not, of course, unique to Rochester, but was duplicated all over the country.

In 1918, upon the initiative of the Secretary of War, seven of the largest agencies providing auxiliary services to the fighting forces or aid to their dependents combined in the United War Work Campaign. While figures for Rochester are not ascertainable, the city provided its proportion of the \$560,000,000 which was raised by the United War Work Campaign, the Red Cross, and the Y. M. C. A. between April, 1917, and May, 1918. The real solution to the problem, however, was reached in the organization of War Chests. The first of these were started in Syracuse and Rome, here in New York State. Columbus, Detroit, and Cleveland followed suit; and then in the spring of 1918, Rochester.

Throughout March the Chamber of Commerce had carefully investigated the set-up in other cities, and in April the Rochester Patriotic and Community Fund, Inc., was established. George Eastman was appointed president of the organization, and President Rush Rhees of



the University became chairman of the Budget Committee. It was decided that a concerted drive on a large scale to raise money for war purposes would make it extremely hard for the local philanthropic organizations to obtain independently what they would require for their ever-present needs. They were, therefore, asked to join the Chest, and thirty-six of them decided to accept. After considerable study, the budget was finally set at \$3,750,000, of which \$2,662,000 was to go to War Fund quotas, and \$448,335 to local charities, the remainder making up a surplus to be drawn upon for unforeseen needs. The week of May 20-27 was set aside for the campaign, the same period which had been designated by President Wilson and Governor Whitman for the National Red Cross Campaign. Rochester's quota toward the Red Cross goal of \$100,000,000 would come out of the new War Chest.

Much excitement prevailed in the city as the campaign got under way, announced by a large display advertisement in the local papers and ushered in on May 20 by the ringing of church bells and blowing of factory whistles. In explaining the new organization to the people of the city, its promoters used some words as applicable today as they were then: "It is not necessary that every man fight at the front, nor is it desirable. Everyone knows that. But it is necessary that everyone who does not fight at the front, fight here at home. He must fight by working for victory, by sacrificing every day until victory comes."

As a result of the highly publicized and enthusiastic campaign, the workers (many of whom had labored literally day and night) were able to announce at a jubilant final meeting that a total of \$4,838,093 had been pledged—an oversubscription of \$1,088,093. More than 117,000 citizens of Rochester and Monroe County participated in this communal enterprise. The largest item in the War Chest budget was the Red Cross quota.

## The Red Cross

Rochester's Red Cross chapter did an excellent piece of work during World War I, when it really began its career. This organization was first launched in 1881, at which time the second Red Cross chapter in the country was organized here, being completely spontaneous and unofficial in character. In 1906 a local chapter of a newly chartered American Red Cross was formed. It lasted officially only two years

but remained in close touch thereafter with the national body. The war situation led directly to the reorganization of this chapter in 1916, and George Eastman was made its president. A strict interpretation of neutrality restricted the scope of its activities during the ensuing year. Its chief work was to raise funds for and to help organize the United States Army Base Hospital, Number 19.

In February, 1917, upon the break of diplomatic relations with Germany, a message came through from Washington asking that the Rochester chapter begin at once to carry out the tasks for which the American Red Cross had been chartered. Immediately, headquarters were set up in the Hotel Rochester, and workrooms were soon provided in the Hotel Seneca. Early in 1918, the extent of this organization's work had grown so great that it was necessary to use another building, and the former "Friendly Home" on East Avenue was donated for this purpose. Downtown headquarters and a workroom for residents of the west side were also maintained. From these various centers, the Red Cross carried out its multiple tasks—completing the equipment of the Base Hospital, training volunteers, providing surgical dressings and garments for our own soldiers and for our Allies, collecting fruit stones and shells for use by the Army in the manufacture of gas masks, organizing the volunteer nursing service during the flu epidemic, maintaining a Bureau of Information to keep track of men in service and of civilians in countries under enemy control.

Over 100,000 Rochesterians belonged to the Red Cross during these war years, and by April, 1917, five thousand women were actively working for the organization. By the end of the war, Rochester's quota for surgical dressings and knitted garments had been made the same as those of Brooklyn and Buffalo, which were far larger chapters. A canteen division supplied candy, postcards, cigarettes, and when necessary, food to the soldiers passing through the city. Groups of women met all the troop trains and saw to it that the men on their way to camp or overseas were given a welcome and a pleasant interlude on a tiresome journey. One of the most appreciated services was a large bath house near the New York Central Station. Upwards of 50,000 men availed themselves of this opportunity to enjoy the luxury of a hot bath. Our local chapter sent overseas about 50 paid nurses and trained some 250 nurse's aides, while a Home Service division looked after the needs of the families of men in the service.

Along with the accommodations which the Red Cross provided for the servicemen, many other organizations and individuals took it upon themselves to entertain the soldiers and sailors passing through the city or visiting here. A recreation room was set up in Exposition Park (later renamed Edgerton Park) under the able direction of Edward R. Putnam, director of the Municipal Museum. The room was open every day and numerous dances were held for the soldiers. The Y. W. C. A. held Sunday evening "At Homes" for men in service, and the D. A. R.'s "Open House" made the Rochester visit of many a boy in khaki something to remember with pleasure. Leaders of the Y. M. C. A., the Y. W. C. A., and the Jewish Welfare Board secured invitations to family dinners for the service men. These organizations not only provided for the physical well-being of the soldiers and sailors, but they also sought to raise their morale and that of their families by personal visits to their homes. A recreation hut was opened at Kodak Park for the men of the School of Aerial Photography. It was operated jointly by the Y. M. C. A. and K. of C., and at the time was said to be the first in the world under such co-operative sponsorship.

Here and there along the streets in 1917 and 1918 were placed barrels and other containers for gifts of cigarettes and candy for the servicemen. The movement to collect such items, or the money to purchase them, was sponsored by Mayor Edgerton after he had received a postcard from the men in the Sixth Division of the New York Naval Militia in May, 1917, stating tersely: "All the boys are busted; scare up some smokes for us. We also like candy." Work was also begun immediately on the task of supplying men in the forces with reading material. In September, 1917, the *Herald* reported that during the previous month 2,200 books had been contributed by Rochesterians; 7,000 periodicals had also been collected and were ready to be distributed.

### Coal and Food Conservation

The coal shortage was already acute in February of 1917. Some Rochesterians really shivered during this period, for the fuel situation had apparently been given little thought ahead of time, and no remedies had been devised to equalize distribution. During the late spring and early winter months of 1917, coal was being delivered only in quarter-ton lots to those fortunate enough to be steady customers of

some coal dealer. Newcomers to the city or those who for some reason or other had not in former years been regular coal users were just out of luck. Aggravating the situation were the unscrupulous persons who had filled up their bins earlier and who now, panicky about future hardships, drew upon the city's meager supply to add to their already ample stocks. In contrast were the citizens, like Commissioner of Parks Lamberton, who offered to give up some of their own supplies to others whose needs were acute.

Writers in the local papers were inclined to be indignant over the car loads of coal standing on railroad tracks waiting shipment to Canada. It was suggested that since a shortage of cars was supposedly the only reason for Rochester's situation, it would be eminently sensible to empty the cars, use the coal here, send the empty cars to Pennsylvania where they could be refilled at the mines, and sent back here in plenty of time to be forwarded to Canada when the shipping jam eased up. Whether this was a practical solution or not would be hard to tell merely from the newspaper accounts. When the worst of the local crisis had passed, several articles were published telling how urgently the waiting coal had been needed by our northern neighbor, one writer stating that some Canadian hospitals had been forced to burn furniture to try to keep their buildings warm.

Finally, the city authorities worked out a system whereby those in actual want of fuel notified their local police precincts. The police investigated, and if the need were genuine, they issued an order entitling the holder to a specified amount of coal. This system seemed to work fairly well; and the same plan of police inspection was followed the next fall, when coal could be purchased only in one-ton lots, no one being allowed a second ton until the first was used up. A municipal coal bureau was established and housed in temporary sheds on the Court House grounds. The shortage became so serious in January, 1918, that schools, theaters, churches, and other institutions were closed. The hours during which such places could be heated had already been subjected to regulations, however, and the closing of the schools was partly occasioned by the flu epidemic as well as by the lack of fuel.

Shortages of food, caused by the demands of our armed forces and Allies and by shipping difficulties, were also apparent early in the war. The sugar situation was one of the most serious. Prices shot

way up, and sugar sometimes could not be bought at any price and sometimes could be procured only in half-pound packages. Very frequently lines of women were formed in front of Sibley's department store because it was rumored that sugar would be sold there in one-pound quantities. Recipes for sugarless dishes appeared in all the papers and magazines, cooks being urged to use more honey and syrup. The small amounts allotted by restaurants to individual customers were a constant source of newspaper jokes and cartoons. Other shortages soon appeared, and "meatless," "wheatless," "eggless," and "butterless" recipes were published alongside the "sugarless" ones. "Wheatless meals" and "meatless days" became familiar terms to everyone and familiar actualities to most people.

Classes in food conservation were held at Convention Hall under the auspices of the local chapter of the Hoover Conservation Committee, and a campaign was launched to organize housewives into an army of food savers. Mechanics Institute also gave a number of courses in food and fuel conservation. One of the earliest ideas advanced to help out the food situation was the planting of "victory gardens." George Eastman turned the lawn of his East Avenue home into a vegetable garden, and many Rochesterians followed suit. Other enthusiastic Rochester victory gardeners urged that steps be taken to convert the parks into farms. Mayor Edgerton, however, was one of the few people who held out against the indiscriminate conversion of land to gardening. In April, 1917, a cartoon was published in the *Herald* showing Mayor Edgerton protecting the public golf courses against an army of would-be vegetable growers. The caption read "Acres for Golf, but Not One Foot for Potatoes."

As the war advanced, Rochesterians were warned "Don't talk about the war in public places where a German spy may gather bits of information of value to the enemy." This warning was not so terse as our "A slip of the lip may sink a ship," but it was designed for the same purpose. In February of 1918 the Chamber of Commerce went on record as advocating the death penalty for saboteurs. Resentment over the known cases of enemy sabotage and espionage contributed toward an attitude of suspicion and distrust that tended to make life extremely uncomfortable for German-American citizens, the great majority of whom were absolutely loyal to the United States. In Rochester, however, the situation was not so bad as in some other localities.

At the request of the United State's Marshal, the city's only German language daily, the *Abendpost*, published the Federal laws covering the state of war and the full text of Wilson's proclamation. The local officials reiterated the promise of the President to the effect that law-abiding German nationals had nothing to fear, and the German-American Alliance, an organization comprising a number of German societies, published a statement declaring that Germans in this city had every intention of obeying the laws of the country. The work of supervising and registering enemy aliens was also entrusted to the United States Marshal, Judge John D. Lynn. While there were undoubtedly evidences of hysteria, bigotry, and intolerance, it seems evident that the authorities here, and a large part of the population, attempted to be not only fair but generous to the alien. In telling of the way in which the city's German and German-American inhabitants conducted themselves during this trying period, Judge Lynn states: "They were not the class of people who make trouble from intention. The great majority of them would have behaved just as well if there had not been a United States Marshal within a thousand miles. We didn't know this, however, until we had had the experience. There were always a few who were possible trouble makers, and to restrain these, supervision of the whole was necessary."

### Wartime Industries

When the United States became the arsenal for the Allied powers, factories worked day and night, farm prices soared, and Americans found themselves in the somewhat embarrassing position of profiting greatly from the sorrows of another part of the globe. While boom proportions were not reached in Rochester, the city, nevertheless, enjoyed a very comfortable period of prosperity.

During these years Eastman Kodak and Bausch and Lomb not only made supplies for the British but were also engaged in extremely valuable experiments. Aware of the complete dependence of the United States upon Europe for optical glass, Bausch's had been experimenting in this direction for several years before 1914. As the war situation developed, the company obtained the co-operation of the Bureau of Standards, and ceramic engineers and scientists were assigned by the

Government to work with the staff at the plant. So successful had the experiments been that by the time the United States entered the war this company was prepared to make most of the types of glass necessary for fire-control and other war instruments. At the beginning of 1917, Bausch and Lomb was the only large plant producing any considerable amount of this essential material, turning out only about 2,000 pounds a month. By the end of that year, however, it was producing 40,000 pounds of optical glass. Seventy per cent of this type of glass used by the Government during the period of April, 1917, to November 11, 1918, was supplied by this Rochester firm, the achievements of which were made possible by the close co-operation of the Carnegie Institution, the Bureau of Standards, the General Munitions Board, the National Research Council, the Naval Consulting Board, and other government organizations. At the same time, Bausch and Lomb was producing instruments as well as raw materials. Reflectors, range-finders, gun sights, periscopes, and binoculars were produced in considerable quantities, while new types were being devised by the experts at the plant and new methods of grinding and polishing were worked out.

Meanwhile, for two years prior to our entry into the war, the Eastman Kodak Company had been making experiments on aerial cameras. One of the two hand-held models developed by Kodak had been sent to the Navy for trial early in 1916. Upon our entrance into the war as an ally, Britain supplied the company with some of its models which had proved worthwhile during their years of service. Pending the outcome of its own experiments, the firm turned out numbers of these cameras, which were later superseded by newer English and American designs. As early as October, 1917, an automatic camera was submitted to the military authorities for testing. The famous K-1, one of the milestones in the development of aerial photography, was developed the following summer. A gun camera was perfected, which was superior to the others then in use, and 1,200 of these had been delivered for Army use by the end of the war. At the same time, scientists of the research department were busy on problems connected with the production of synthetic organic chemicals and camouflage.

One of the most interesting and important war activities of the city was the United States School of Aerial Photography, established at



Kodak Park early in 1918. The urgent need for trained men in the rapidly developing field of aerial photography led to the offer by the Eastman Kodak Company to place its unique facilities at the disposal of the Government and to supply the necessary teachers. The Government accepted the proposition and work was begun immediately in preparing barracks, drill grounds, lecture, and work rooms for a corps of some one thousand enlisted men. Two courses were offered, one in photography and one in camera repair. In the nine and one-half months the school was in existence a total of 2,177 men were trained and sent out to duty in this new field of war service.

Two Rochester firms, the Symington Company and the General Railway Signal, were making shells for the British as early as 1915. Later, both companies supplied quantities of munitions to our own Government. Ninety-five per cent of the Gleason Company's output of machine tools, gears, and castings went to our Army, Navy, and our Allies. This company also developed special methods, processes, and tools. Two of its achievements were the development of an improved method of lubricating high speed turbine engines in submarine chasers and the production of special screws for loading shells with high explosives. The Stromberg-Carlson Company furnished large quantities of telephone and radio equipment for use by the Signal Corps. The Gas and Electric Company installed a light oil plant which made possible the recovery of gallons of material for use in explosives. The new coal gas plant of this company was instrumental in relieving the local fuel shortage and also produced tars, ammonia, and other by-products for war uses. About eighty other Rochester firms were engaged either in the production of munitions or in supplying to our Army and Navy clothing, food, or equipment for camps and ships. It was estimated that 60 per cent of the city's manufactured products during these years went to war purposes.

The amount of precision work done in Rochester and the presence of a core of workers highly skilled in very exact trades led to the establishment of the Rochester Ordnance Center. In July, 1917, an Army officer visited the city and made known the needs of the Government in the line of armament manufacture. There were, he said, only three concerns in the country, outside of the regular Army and Navy arsenals, which were making, or were equipped to make, guns



larger than rifles or field guns. The work as he described it was extremely exact and complicated, calling for just the kind of highly specialized workers already present in several Rochester industries. In February, 1918, when the whole country was divided into thirteen Ordnance Divisions, Rochester was made the center of a District which comprised the entire State, with the exception of Long Island, New York City, and nine other counties in the metropolitan area. Final figures showed that in addition to considerable numbers of shells, the Rochester District produced over 41,000 Lewis Machine guns, over 545,000 service rifles, and over 1,200 75-millimeter guns.

At the time the creation of such a district was first discussed in 1917, it was estimated by the Army's representative that 12,000 additional workers would be needed to produce the gun parts required by the Government before July, 1919. Meanwhile, workers were swarming in to find employment in the city's other plants, and soon the swollen population presented a serious problem. To meet it an employment office was set up under the control of the Chamber of Commerce. A trained director was hired and took over the tasks of organizing a central employment bureau and of dealing with a housing shortage, a transportation crisis, and crying needs in the fields of health and recreation. The various manufacturers of the city co-operated very well in the employment service, and considering the confusion prevalent and the short time it had to operate, the success of the enterprise was remarkable, attracting nation-wide attention. The seriousness of some of the problems was so great that after a survey had been conducted of available dwellings, a plan was evolved to house workers in the mansions along East Avenue should the influx continue. The early end of the war, however, made this step unnecessary.

During the war years of 1917 and 1918, Rochesterians were faced, much as they are today, with the problem of a farm labor shortage. The fruit growers and other agriculturists of the area found themselves in a real predicament at this time — the young men who would normally have worked on the farms being rapidly drawn into the Army or into war industries. Draft boards were deluged with requests for deferments, and authorities were asked to "do something" to prevent the draining of manpower away from the farms. As an expedient, vagrants were rounded up and told to work or go to jail, but it soon

became evident that they made very inadequate helpers. More satisfactory was the establishment of camps which were set up for school boys who were released from academic restraints and sent out to pick vegetables and fruits.

Many of the fields of war work necessitated special training, which the various agencies in the city hastened to supply. The public schools offered courses to meet the new demands for technical training, and emphasis was placed on the importance of such studies not only for the immediate emergency but also for the period to follow. In January, 1918, the *Post Express* declared that Rochesterians "of all ages" were flocking back to school, "to take advantage of after war conditions." Mechanics Institute trained women in mechanical drawing so that they could replace men in this field. The Institute also undertook, in conjunction with the Government, a course of instruction for optical workers, which made available dozens of employees for local war plants. A realistic policy was the one which instituted courses in occupational therapy and rehabilitation with a view to aiding disabled veterans upon their return. The most important war function of the Institute was the training of several hundred soldiers in various trades. These men not only studied at the school but were billeted there while receiving expert instruction in carpentry, automobile and machine work, electrical construction, pattern making, wood turning, forging, and electricity.

Another Rochester institution which found itself virtually transformed by the war was the University. President Rush Rhees in telling of its work during this period said: "Our laboratories and their personnel, our classrooms and teachers, our whole equipment of men and appliances were dedicated to service for the victory of the Army and Navy." In the fall of 1918 the organization of the local division of the Students Army Training Corps caused a practical suspension of the regular work of the College for Men. This was a voluntary organization of students liable to the draft who lived on the University Campus while receiving military instruction and training and as much of the normal academic course as could be worked in. Approximately two hundred and fifty men were enrolled in this corps, but the experiment had hardly gotten under way when the war ended, and in January, 1919, the University returned to its former mode of life.

## Those Who Served

First to leave for active service in 1917 were the city's small groups of organized volunteers. These units included divisions of the Naval Militia, Company H of the New York State Cavalry, and the Third New York Infantry, the members of which had returned but a few weeks previously from duty on the Mexican border. It was the hope and, in fact, the expectation of these groups that they would be left intact, preserving their identity as Rochester organizations. In the interests of greater efficiency, however, it was found necessary to break them up and assign the men to ships, stations, and regiments where they were most needed. This fact, combined with the scattering of enlisted and drafted men throughout nearly every division of the A. E. F., makes it impossible to point to any particular engagements of the war as ones in which Rochesterians took a large part, as one can do with some of the battles of the Civil War, for example. Before the United States entered the war, moreover, numbers of Monroe County men had joined the Canadian, English, Polish, Italian, and French armies.

One of the most interesting of the volunteer units which left during the ensuing months was the Base Hospital, Number 19. Under Dr. John M. Swan this group had been organized as early as 1915 and had gathered together a splendid staff of local doctors, nurses, and volunteer aides. Although it was complete with equipment for a hospital of 500 beds in April, it had built itself up to a 1,000-bed unit before leaving the city. Its headquarters were in Vichy, France, now under the shadow of infamy, but then a famous convalescent center for sick and wounded Americans. In addition to these already organized groups of volunteers, there were the regular enlistees in the various arms of the service.

One of the unfortunate features of the last war was the publication of the so-called "slacker lists." The names, not of young men who had been proven draft dodgers, but of those who for some reason or other had not shown up for induction, were published from time to time in the papers. All too often a few days or weeks later an item would be printed stating that so-and-so whose name had appeared on one of the lists had reported at some other board or was already serv-

ing in some division of the armed forces. It is said that in some cities over-patriotic young women would present to young men whom they thought should be in uniform a white feather in token of their scorn. Rochester may not have gone quite that far, but there were many cases of hasty and ill-considered judgments which seem all the more regrettable in view of the later statement of the United States Marshal, Judge John D. Lynn, that there were "no military slackers" in the city.

When the first group of selectees, numbering only forty-eight, left the city on September 7, 1917, they were taken from the Armory to the Lehigh Valley Station in automobiles and were escorted by a band. Bearing banners inscribed "First To Go," they were cheered by a large crowd. It was soon discovered that such a demonstration for each group as it departed would be impracticable, but officials announced that arrangements would be made to give the men some sort of send-off that would assure them that "Rochester is with them and appreciates the sacrifice they are making." Mothers, wives, sweethearts, and friends continued to crowd the station to see "their boys" off. Also present whenever he could make it was Mayor Edgerton, the "Uncle Hi" of ever-green memory.

In order to provide against sabotage and disorder a Home Defense League was formed in 1917, with the active co-operation of Mayor Edgerton. This began as an organization of men between the ages of twenty-one and sixty, but later came to consist of those who for some reason or other could not join the regular armed forces. By the end of the war eight companies had been organized here, numbering altogether some four or five hundred men who were paid when doing actual guard duty, but at other times volunteered their services. In the fall of 1918 a Home Defense Corps was also set up, a local unit of a state organization highly favored by the governor but considered unnecessary by the mayor and other friends of the existing Defense League.

In the summer of 1918 Father Rochester decided to present medals to the mothers of men in the service. The women were required to register first at the headquarters of the War Service Corps where their credentials were checked, but the medals were presented at exercises in Exposition Park on September 5 before thirty thousand spectators. Six thousand mothers gathered and marched to the grandstand in the park

where they were addressed by Mayor Edgerton and State Senator John B. Mullan, while pastel tinted asters were showered from an airplane circling above the crowd.

What sort of men went forth from Rochester in the last war? Anyone who had witnessed that parade of mothers would have known the answer. All sorts. Some with college educations, others who had finished the sixth grade; some who were prospering in the professions, others who had never been able to find jobs; some who had haunted poolrooms and street corners, others who had sung in church choirs and attended Sunday School classes; some who were burning with patriotic zeal and enthusiasm, and others who did not quite grasp what it was all about. No, they were not "heaven-born" this "band of heroes," but Rochester-born. They were boys who had watched with fascination the raising of lift bridges on the canal, who had risked their necks on the forbidden "Indian Trails" along the river gorge, who had known the bustle of Main Street on Saturday evening and the calm of Sunday morning.

One of the best ways to know these young men is to read some of their letters and journals. Many of them were written by the light of candles in the mud of the trenches; and they tell as nothing else can of how ordinary boys raised in the ways of peace reacted to the ways of war. One cannot help feel a wrench at his heart upon reading, for example, a diary, written from desolate stations right behind the front lines, in which the young author tells of poor food, weariness, rats, lice, and mud. He tells, too, of how "the Hepaticas are all in blossom making the hill a sheet of blue, while above clouds of the yellow flowers of the *Cornus mascula* make almost a fairyland. Here and there are fragrant reddish wild lilacs that are in blossom before the leaves. I also saw wild columbines and primroses ready to blossom in a few days." Not long after writing this account, he was killed in action.

There is the interesting and exciting series of letters from a young pilot, who is now believed to be an officer in the Air Corps, in which he describes his training course and his experiences in actual fighting. Writing from a training camp in Scotland, he relates delightedly in a boyish letter to his father: "We have got a new stunt here now, be-

cause the meals are very poor. We fly over the country about mealtime, and look for a nice big country house or farm and come down with imaginary engine trouble. Of course, the people rush out and invite us to stay for lunch, which we accept. After a good meal, we fix our buses and go home. I flew over a large Canadian Hospital yesterday, landed, had lunch, which included pie, and came home in time for tea. One of the fellows here flew over to a Sir Somebody's the other day, landed in such a small field that they had to tear down two fences in order to let him get off. He had chicken and chocolate pudding. We mark our maps now, so that we don't get confused and tell the wrong tale. The people, however, enjoy having an 'Airman' land on their farms as it gives them something to talk about."

Then there are the letters from a young man who enlisted in 1916 in the American Field Ambulance and transferred in May of 1917 to the French Air Corps. Writing to his mother, he described some of his experiences as an ambulance driver in Serbia: "We were very busy for three days, and carried over a thousand wounded from Monastir back to Sakuleno, a distance of fifteen miles. During this time the Germans were shelling the town and the roads leading out, so that we were under heavy fire almost all the time. Had one narrow squeak. Had returned to the hospital about 12 o'clock at night after carrying a load to Sakuleno. There were no more wounded to be transported just then, so was about to go over to our cantonment and turn in, when, for some unknown reason, I pulled a stretcher out of my car, went into the main room of the hospital and lay down on the floor. It was very fortunate I did so. About two hours later a Boche shell of 105 caliber came whistling down over the hill, struck the wall of my room where I should have been sleeping . . . The next night the Germans entertained us with a gas attack. From midnight until four in the morning they sent in about 2,000 gas shells, all of which landed within a quarter of a mile of where we were living. We put on our gas masks and thus escaped the fate of over three hundred civilians, all of whom were killed. Well, here I am safe and sound and anxious to get into some active service." When this soldier died of pneumonia, his French nurse wrote a touching note to his mother in which she said: "We nurses love our wounded and sick as if they were our children, and he was to us very dear, he who came from the United States, not hesitating to give his life."

Twelve days before he was killed in action another young officer wrote: "Recently I read an article in the May Atlantic Monthly on 'The New Death.' Possibly I can appreciate some of the things stated in it better than you can. But we do hope and believe that the effort we are making here will be for the greater good. There is much idealism on the part of the men over here to which they have not the time or inclination or ability to give utterance. There is also much matter-of-factness, disgust with the whole business, or happy-go-lucky acceptance of what comes along . . . I consider that I have had comparatively a very easy time of it thus far. Life never seemed sweeter or better. I have a good chance to survive, but if I don't my great wish is that I am not snuffed out in some fool way by a shell back of the lines but rather while actively engaged in some effort really worth while."

### The End of the War

On November 7, 1918, war-weary Rochesterians gave vent to their emotions unrestrainedly when the news that an armistice had been signed between the Allies and Germany was spread throughout the city and entire country. They simply would not believe that this armistice was false, even when the *Post Express*, the only newspaper in the city to deny the rumor, ground out extras declaring the rumors to be untrue. They showed contempt for this paper by snatching it away from the newsboys and littering Main Street from the Four Corners to East Avenue with copies of it. Even Mayor Edgerton was deluded, and he ordered the City Hall bell to be rung. The Home Defense League and units of that organization, the City Park Band, and the soldier students at the United States Aerial School of Photography at Eastman Kodak Park paraded through the streets, while overhead flew airplanes from Baker's Field. Thousands of shouting celebrants were carried up and down the streets in army trucks, literally intoxicated with glee. Workers in some plants moved out in a body and snake-danced in and out of downtown office buildings until they were utterly exhausted. Yet their abysmal disappointment at the close of the day did not quell their emotions a few days later when the truth of an armistice was actually established.

November 11, 1918, began as early as three o'clock in the morning for the people of Rochester. No one could get a moment's sleep

all through the early hours, for the happy news was expected at any time. A few minutes before four o'clock, the City Hall bell rang and the factory whistles blew, starting the general din which resulted in an ever increasing crescendo of excitement until the close of the day. By five o'clock in the morning the downtown streets of Rochester were filled, and no one worked or was expected to work that day, except newspaper employees. Flags were flying; soldiers and civilians paraded; bands blared and were in discord with all the well-known noise-making devices; small pieces of paper were thrown from windows. There were many who shed tears of joy, and those mothers who lost their sons in the war wept afresh when the realization that their sons would never again come home to them stabbed at their hearts. But whether their tears were of joy or sorrow, all thanked God that the war was over.



